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Commission on the Status of Women

Fifty-eighth session

10-21 March 2014

Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the special session of the General Assembly entitled “Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century”: gender mainstreaming, situations and programmatic matters

Results of the fifty-fourth, fifty-fifth and fifty-sixth sessions of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Note by the secretariat

Summary

The present note reflects the results, including decisions taken, of the fifty-fourth, fifty-fifth and fifty-sixth sessions of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, held in Geneva from 11 February to 1 March 2013, from 8 to 26 July 2013 and from 30 September to 18 October 2013.



I. Introduction

1. In its resolution [47/94](#), the General Assembly recommended that the sessions of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women should be scheduled, whenever possible, to allow for the timely transmission of the results of those sessions for information to the Commission on the Status of Women.

2. The Committee held its fifty-fourth, fifty-fifth and fifty-sixth sessions from 11 February to 1 March 2013, from 8 to 26 July 2013 and from 30 September to 18 October 2013, respectively. At its fifty-fourth session, the Committee elected Nicole Ameline as Chair; Ismat Jahan, Violeta Neubauer and Pramila Patten as Vice-Chairs; and Barbara Bailey as Rapporteur. It also confirmed the members of the Working Group on Communications under the Optional Protocol, namely Olinda Bareiro-Bobadilla, Niklas Bruun, Yoko Hayashi, Pramila Patten and Dubravka Šimonović. The Committee decided to request the General Assembly to provide additional resources to extend the meeting time and membership of the Working Group on Communications under the Optional Protocol to enable it to also examine information received under the inquiry procedure (article 8 of the Optional Protocol) and to enable the Committee to hold one of its annual sessions at United Nations Headquarters in New York (see [A/68/38](#), part three, annexes IV and V). The Committee also adopted a general recommendation on article 16 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (Economic consequences of marriage, family relations and their dissolution; see *ibid.*, annex I) and a statement on the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the strengthening of the United Nations human rights treaty bodies (see *ibid.*, annex VI). It also held a general discussion on access to justice. At its fifty-fifth session, the Committee adopted a statement on women in the process of political transition in Egypt, Libya and Tunisia (see annex I to the present note) and a statement on strengthened cooperation with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) (see annex II to the present note). At its fifty-sixth session, the Committee adopted a general recommendation on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations (see [CEDAW/C/GC/30](#)) and held a general discussion on rural women.

3. The Committee continued to engage with partners at its sessions in 2013. At its fifty-fourth session, the Committee heard a briefing from the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, Magdalena Sepúlveda Carmona, on the guiding principles on extreme poverty and human rights (see [A/HRC/21/39](#)). Directly following the fifty-fourth session, the Chair of the Committee delivered a statement to the Commission on the Status of Women in New York, where she also held meetings with the Secretary-General and the then Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director of UN-Women, Michelle Bachelet.

4. At its fifty-fifth session, the Committee held a public high-level panel discussion on HIV/AIDS and women's rights, jointly organized by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and UN-Women. The participants were the United Nations Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights, Flavia Pansieri; the Deputy Executive Director, Intergovernmental Support and Strategic Partnerships Bureau, and then Acting Head of UN-Women, Lakshmi Puri; the Deputy Executive Director of UNAIDS, Jan Beagle; the Director of the UNDP Geneva Representation Office,

Petra Lantz; and a Committee member, Theodora Oby Nwankwo. The Committee also met in private the Deputy Executive Director, Intergovernmental Support and Strategic Partnerships Bureau, and then Acting Head of UN-Women to discuss ways to further strengthen cooperation between the Committee and UN-Women. It further met the manager of the Gender Partnership Programme of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), Kareen Jabre, to discuss the future cooperation of the Committee with IPU in relation to the implementation of the Convention. In addition, the Chair of the Committee addressed the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 2013, held in Geneva, during its discussion on gender mainstreaming through the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women.

5. At its fifty-sixth session, the Committee heard a briefing from the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants, François Crépeau, on his work, especially in relation to migrant women. In addition, the Committee and the Human Rights Committee held an informal consultation, organized by the Center for Reproductive Rights, at which both received a briefing on and discussed issues of common concern in relation to sexual and reproductive rights. The Committee also met a delegation of national parliamentarians attending the 129th Assembly of IPU, in Geneva, and discussed possible ways of strengthening cooperation in relation to the implementation of the Convention and the Committee's concluding observations at the national level.

6. Throughout its sessions in 2013, the Committee continued to benefit from country-specific information received from United Nations entities and specialized agencies, other intergovernmental organizations, national human rights institutions and non-governmental organizations (the last-mentioned coordinated by International Women's Rights Action Watch Asia Pacific).

7. A number of side events were organized by non-governmental organizations and other partners, such as a publicly webcast panel discussion on integrating the provisions of the Convention into development planning that was organized by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation at the Committee's fifty-fifth session.

8. As at 18 October 2013, the closing date of the fifty-sixth session of the Committee, there were 187 States parties to the Convention and 104 States parties to the Optional Protocol thereto. A total of 68 States had accepted the amendment to article 20 (1) of the Convention concerning the meeting time of the Committee. To bring the amendment into force, two thirds of the States parties to the Convention (currently 125 States parties) must deposit their instruments of acceptance with the Secretary-General.

II. Results of the fifty-fourth, fifty-fifth and fifty-sixth sessions of the Committee

A. Reports considered by the Committee

9. At its fifty-fourth session, the Committee considered the reports of seven States parties submitted under article 18 of the Convention and issued its concluding observations thereon, namely Angola ([CEDAW/C/AGO/CO/6](#)), Austria ([CEDAW/C/AUT/CO/7-8](#)), Cyprus ([CEDAW/C/CYP/CO/6-7](#)), Greece

(CEDAW/C/GRC/CO/7), Hungary (CEDAW/C/HUN/CO/7-8), Pakistan (CEDAW/C/PAK/CO/4) and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (CEDAW/C/MKD/CO/4-5). It is noted that the consideration of Solomon Islands in the absence of a report was also scheduled for the fifty-fourth session. Solomon Islands submitted its combined initial to third periodic reports before the fifty-fourth session, however, and the consideration was subsequently postponed to the fifty-ninth session to allow for the translation of the report and the establishment of the list of issues by the pre-sessional working group.

10. At its fifty-fifth session, the Committee considered the reports of eight States parties submitted under article 18 of the Convention and issued its concluding observations thereon, namely Afghanistan (CEDAW/C/AFG/CO/1-2), Bosnia and Herzegovina (CEDAW/C/BIH/CO/4-5), Cape Verde (CEDAW/C/CPV/CO/7-8), Cuba (CEDAW/C/CUB/CO/7-8), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (CEDAW/C/COD/CO/6-7), the Dominican Republic (CEDAW/C/DOM/CO/6-7), Serbia (CEDAW/C/SRB/CO/2-3) and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (CEDAW/C/GBR/CO/7). While the consideration of the combined second and third periodic reports of Serbia had originally been scheduled for the fifty-third session, such consideration had, at the request of the State party, been postponed to the fifty-fifth session.

11. At its fifty-sixth session, the Committee considered the reports of seven States parties submitted under article 18 of the Convention and issued its concluding observations thereon, namely Andorra (CEDAW/C/AND/CO/2-3), Benin (CEDAW/C/BEN/CO/4), Cambodia (CEDAW/C/KHM/CO/4-5), Colombia (CEDAW/C/COL/CO/7-8), the Republic of Moldova (CEDAW/C/MDA/CO/4-5), Seychelles (CEDAW/C/SYC/CO/1-5) and Tajikistan (CEDAW/C/TJK/CO/4-5). It is noted that the consideration of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines in the absence of a report was also scheduled for the fifty-sixth session. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines submitted its combined fourth to eighth periodic reports before the fifty-sixth session, however, and the consideration was subsequently postponed to the sixty-first session to allow for the translation of the report and the establishment of the list of issues by the pre-sessional working group.

12. Representatives of United Nations entities, specialized agencies and non-governmental organizations attended the sessions. The reports of the States parties, the Committee's lists of issues and questions, the States parties' replies thereto and their introductory statements are posted on the website of the Committee under the relevant session.

13. With regard to each of the States parties considered, the Committee adopted concluding observations (see paras. 9-11 above), which are also available on the Committee's website.

B. Action taken in relation to the implementation of article 21 of the Convention

General recommendation on the economic consequences of marriage and its dissolution

14. On 26 February 2013, the Committee adopted general recommendation No. 29 on article 16 of the Convention (Economic consequences of marriage, family

relations and their dissolution; see [A/68/38](#), part three, annex I), by consensus. The general recommendation addresses the discriminatory nature of many family laws, concluding that all family laws must adhere to the equality norms of the Convention. Some of these norms include the equal treatment of women and men as surviving spouses or partners, prohibit the disinheritance of the surviving spouse and provide that rights to land should not be conditioned on forced marriage to a deceased spouse's brother or any other person. It recognizes the various forms of contemporary family relationships that give rise to property rights. These family relationships may include same-sex relationships, de facto unions and registered partnerships. The general recommendation states that polygamy should be discouraged and prohibited, while protecting the economic rights of those women who are currently in a polygamous marriage. Property rights subject to fair distribution after the dissolution of marriage include pensions, social security payments and land. The general recommendation also addresses the rights of widows, noting that many States parties, by law or custom, deny widows equality with widowers as to inheritance, leaving them economically vulnerable upon the death of the spouse.

General recommendation on the human rights of women in armed conflict and post-conflict situations

15. On 18 October 2013, the Committee adopted general recommendation No. 30 on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations (see [CEDAW/C/GC/30](#)), unanimously by roll-call vote. The general recommendation emphasizes that States parties to the Convention are required to uphold women's rights before, during and after conflict, whether they are directly involved in fighting or are providing peacekeeping troops or donor assistance for conflict prevention, humanitarian aid or post-conflict reconstruction. States parties should exercise due diligence in ensuring that non-State actors, such as armed groups and private security contractors, are held accountable for crimes against women. The general recommendation stresses the importance of women's involvement in conflict prevention, resolution and peacebuilding, in addition to highlighting the need for a concerted and integrated approach that places the Security Council agenda on women, peace and security within the broader framework of the implementation of the Convention.

Joint general recommendation/comment on harmful practices

16. The joint working group of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and the Committee on the Rights of the Child met during the fifty-fourth, fifty-fifth and fifty-sixth sessions to revise the draft general recommendation/comment on harmful practices and again on 6 October 2013 to finalize it.

General recommendation on access to justice

17. The working group met during the fifty-fourth, fifty-fifth and fifty-sixth sessions. On 18 February 2013, the Committee held a half-day of general discussion on women and access to justice, as part of the first phase in the elaboration of a general recommendation on the subject. The discussion was opened by the Chair of the Committee and was followed by opening addresses by representatives of the joint OHCHR (Mona Rishmawi), UN-Women (Lee Waldorf) and UNDP (Zanofer

Ismalebbe) programme on access to justice, which had sponsored the event. The envisaged general recommendation on women and access to justice was introduced by the Chair of the working group on women and access to justice, Silvia Pimentel. The following seven keynote speakers explored the legal, procedural and institutional barriers faced by women in gaining access to justice, women's social, economic and practical challenges in gaining access to justice and the challenges faced by disadvantaged groups of women in gaining access to justice: Frances Raday, Vice-Chair of the working group on discrimination against women in law and practice; Sara Hossain, Honorary Director of Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust; Wilder Tayler, Secretary-General of the International Commission of Jurists; Simone Cusack, Lawyer, Senior Policy/Research Officer at the Australian Human Rights Commission; Magdalena Sepulveda Carmona, Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights; Shaheen Sardar Ali, Vice-Chair of the working group on arbitrary detention, Professor of Law at the University of Warwick, United Kingdom; and Karen Vertido, the author of a communication submitted under article 2 of the Optional Protocol, in relation to which the Committee had found violations of the Convention. After the interventions of the keynote speakers, oral statements were made by representatives of the following States parties: Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden (joint statement), Argentina, Switzerland, Australia, Sri Lanka, Bahrain, Slovenia and Brazil. Further statements were made by representatives of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the International Labour Organization and 13 civil society organizations.

Working group on gender equality in the context of asylum and statelessness

18. The working group met during the fifty-sixth session. On 11 October 2013, the Committee discussed the draft general recommendation on gender-related dimensions of refugee status, asylum and statelessness, in the presence of two representatives of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

Working group on rural women

19. The working group on rural women met during the fifty-sixth session. On 7 October 2013, the Committee held a half-day of general discussion on rural women, as part of the first phase in the elaboration of a general recommendation on the subject. The discussion was opened by the Chair of the Committee and followed by opening addresses by the Assistant Executive Director for Partnerships and Governance Services of the World Food Programme (also representing the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the International Fund for Agricultural Development and UN-Women as co-organizers), Elisabeth Rasmusson, and the Director of the Human Rights Treaties Division of OHCHR, Ibrahim Salama. The envisaged general recommendation on rural women was introduced by the Chair of the working group on rural women, Naéla Gabr. The following five keynote speakers explored the legal, socioeconomic and other challenges facing the full realization of rural women's rights: a member of the working group on discrimination against women in law and practice, Emna Aouij; the Special Rapporteur on the right to food, Olivier de Schutter; the Special Rapporteur on the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation, Catarina de Albuquerque; the Co-Executive Director of the Global Initiative for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Mayra Gomez; and a representative of the grass-roots organization Groot

Kenya, Violet Shivutse. After the interventions of the keynote speakers, oral statements were made by representatives of the following States parties: Australia, Spain, Cuba, Brazil, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Syrian Arab Republic and Thailand. Further statements were made by representatives of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the International Fund for Agricultural Development, the International Labour Organization, UNAIDS and nine civil society organizations. Representatives of the following 30 States attended the general discussion: Algeria, Australia, Benin, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Canada, Croatia, Cuba, Ecuador, Egypt, Ethiopia, Germany, Guatemala, Holy See, Indonesia, Israel, Panama, Paraguay, Rwanda, Slovenia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey, Uruguay, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) and Yemen.

Working group on climate change and natural disasters

20. The working group met during the fifty-sixth session.

Working group on the right to education

21. The working group met during the fifty-fourth, fifty-fifth and fifty-sixth sessions. The Committee decided to hold a half-day of general discussion on the right to education at its fifty-eighth session, in July 2014.

Working group on the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

22. At its fifty-fifth session, the Committee decided to transform the focal point on UN-Women into a standing working group and entrusted it with the elaboration, jointly with UN-Women, of an action plan for 2014-2015. The working group met during the fifty-sixth session.

Working group on the Inter-Parliamentary Union

23. At its fifty-fifth session, the Committee established a standing working group on IPU to further strengthen its cooperation with that body. The working group met during the fifty-sixth session. On 7 October 2013, the Committee held a private meeting with a high-level delegation of parliamentarians to discuss possible ways of cooperation between the Committee and national parliaments in implementing and promoting the Convention at the national level.

Joint working group of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and the Human Rights Committee

24. At its fifty-fifth session, the Committee decided to transform the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women/Human Rights Committee focal point into a standing working group. The working group met during the fifty-sixth session. On 14 October 2013, the Committee and the Human Rights Committee held a joint informal consultation, organized by the Center for Reproductive Rights, at which both received a briefing on and discussed issues of common concern in relation to sexual and reproductive rights.

Focal point for sexual and reproductive rights

25. At its fifty-fifth session, the Committee established a focal point for sexual and reproductive rights, with two alternates. The focal point and alternates met during the fifty-sixth session.

Gender and HIV/AIDS focal point

26. At its fifty-fourth session, the Committee established a focal point for gender and HIV/AIDS. The Committee held a public high-level panel discussion on HIV/AIDS and women's rights at its fifty-fifth session, jointly organized by OHCHR, UNAIDS, UNDP and UN-Women.

C. Action taken in relation to ways and means of expediting the work of the Committee**Enhancing the Committee's working methods under article 18 of the Convention****Working methods**

27. The Committee decided to incorporate the guidelines on independence and impartiality of members of the human rights treaty bodies, adopted by the Chairs of the human rights treaty bodies at their twenty-fourth meeting, into its rules of procedure. The Committee also decided to allow for public webcasting of its dialogues with States parties and other public meetings. It also revised the standard paragraphs in its concluding observations by shortening and merging several of them. The Committee also took decisions relating to its interaction with non-governmental organizations and other external partners and to the membership of task forces to enhance the constructive dialogue with States parties.

28. At its fifty-fourth session, the Committee continued its discussions on the treaty body strengthening process. It adopted a statement (see [A/68/38](#), part three, annex VI) in which it welcomed the efforts of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to address the difficulties faced by the treaty body system and the many proposals to overcome them made in her report on the strengthening of the United Nations human rights treaty bodies ([A/66/860](#)). At its fifty-fifth session, the Committee decided that each expert should join a minimum of four country task forces per session to ensure that each task force would be composed of a minimum of 10 members. The Committee also decided that briefing and meeting requests from non-governmental organizations and other external partners should, in principle, reach the Committee at least one month before a session. At the fifty-sixth session, the Committee decided to continue the practice of publicly webcasting its dialogues with States parties and other public meetings beyond the trial period covering the fifty-fifth and fifty-sixth sessions, with a view to increasing the visibility, transparency and accountability of the reporting procedure.

Follow-up procedure

29. The Committee continued its work under the follow-up procedure at its fifty-fourth, fifty-fifth and fifty-sixth sessions, adopting the reports of the Rapporteur on follow-up to concluding observations and considering the follow-up reports of Argentina, Australia, Bhutan, Botswana, the Czech Republic, Israel, Malawi,

Nigeria, the Russian Federation, Switzerland, Timor-Leste, Turkey, Ukraine, the United Republic of Tanzania and Uzbekistan. It also considered additional follow-up information received from Guatemala and Japan. The reports and additional information are posted on the web page of the Committee, under “Quick links to key documents/Follow-up to concluding observations”. At its fifty-fourth session, the Committee amended its methodology with regard to the follow-up procedure and adopted a document containing information for States parties and other stakeholders on the submission of reports under the follow-up procedure (see [A/68/38](#), part three, annex III). At its fifty-sixth session, the Committee decided to extend the term of Barbara Bailey as Rapporteur on follow-up and to appoint Xiaoqiao Zou as an alternate, both for a period of one year until 31 December 2014. It also adopted an assessment of the follow-up procedure, concluding that the procedure should be continued.

Overdue reports

30. The Committee decided that the secretariat should systematically remind States parties whose reports were five years or more overdue to submit their reports as soon as possible. There are currently 14 States parties whose reports are overdue by five years or more: Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, Ireland, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Malaysia, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, San Marino, Sao Tome and Principe and Trinidad and Tobago. With regard to long-overdue reports, the Committee decided that, as a last resort, and failing receipt of the long-overdue reports by a specified date, it would proceed with the consideration of the implementation of the Convention in the State party in the absence of a report. In 2014 and 2015, the Committee is scheduled to review the following States parties in the absence of a report: Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Saint Kitts and Nevis and Trinidad and Tobago. States parties have been responsive to the reminders transmitted by the secretariat, as evidenced by the number of reports submitted and scheduled for consideration. The Committee currently has a total of 41 reports scheduled for consideration between the fifty-seventh session (February 2014) and the sixty-second session (October 2015).

Dates of future sessions of the Committee

31. The Committee confirmed the tentative dates of its fifty-seventh, fifty-eighth and fifty-ninth sessions as follows:

Fifty-seventh session

- (a) Twenty-eighth session of the Working Group on Communications under the Optional Protocol: 4-7 February 2014, Geneva;
- (b) Plenary: 10-28 February 2014, Geneva;
- (c) Pre-sessional working group for the fifty-ninth session: 3-7 March 2014, Geneva;

Fifty-eighth session

- (a) Twenty-ninth session of the Working Group on Communications under the Optional Protocol: 25-27 June 2014, Geneva;

- (b) Plenary: 30 June-18 July 2014, Geneva;
- (c) Pre-sessional working group for the sixtieth session: 21-25 July 2014, Geneva;

Fifty-ninth session

- (a) Thirtieth session of the Working Group on Communications under the Optional Protocol: 15-17 October 2014, Geneva;
- (b) Plenary: 20 October-7 November 2014, Geneva;
- (c) Pre-sessional working group for the sixty-first session: 10-14 November 2014, Geneva.

Reports to be considered at future sessions of the Committee

32. The Committee confirmed that it will consider the reports of the following States parties at its fifty-seventh session: Bahrain, Cameroon, Finland, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Qatar and Sierra Leone. The Committee will consider the reports of the following States parties at its fifty-eighth session: Central African Republic, Georgia, India, Lithuania, Mauritania, Peru, Swaziland and Syrian Arab Republic. The Committee will consider the reports of the following States parties at its fifty-ninth session: Belgium, Brunei Darussalam, China, Ghana, Guinea, Poland, Solomon Islands and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

D. Action taken by the Committee in respect of issues arising from article 2 and article 8 of the Optional Protocol

33. At its fifty-fifth session, the Committee discussed and approved an internal document prepared by the secretariat containing standard operating procedures for the conduct of inquiries under article 8 of the Optional Protocol.

34. The Committee received a briefing on the country visit undertaken in connection with inquiry No. 2010/1.

35. The members designated by the Committee for inquiry No. 2011/1 held a meeting with representatives of the State party concerned in order to reiterate their request to visit the territory of that State party.

36. At its fifty-fifth session, the Committee endorsed the reports of the Working Group on Communications under the Optional Protocol on its twenty-fifth and twenty-sixth sessions. The Committee adopted inadmissibility decisions on communication No. 33/2011 (*M. N. N. v. Denmark*), by vote, and on communications No. 35/2011 (*M. E. N. v. Denmark*) and No. 40/2012 (*M. S. v. Denmark*), by consensus.

37. No specific follow-up action was taken at the fifty-fifth session.

38. With regard to inquiries under article 8 of the Optional Protocol, the Committee adopted its findings and recommendations in relation to inquiry No. 2010/1 and decided to transmit them to the State party concerned. In relation to submission No. 2011/3, the Committee decided to request the State party concerned to submit observations with regard to the information received under article 8 of the Optional Protocol. The members designated by the Committee to conduct inquiry

No. 2011/1 held a meeting with representatives of the State party concerned in preparation for a visit to its territory.

39. At its fifty-sixth session, the Committee endorsed the report of the Working Group on Communications under the Optional Protocol on its twenty-seventh session. The Committee adopted inadmissibility decisions on communications No. 29/2011 (*Maimouna Sankhé v. Spain*) and No. 44/2012 (*M. K. D. A.-A. v. Denmark*), by consensus.

40. No specific follow-up action was taken at the fifty-sixth session.

41. With regard to inquiries under article 8 of the Optional Protocol, the Committee was briefed on the country visit undertaken for inquiry No. 2011/1. In relation to submissions Nos. 2013/1 and 2011/2, the Committee decided to request the States parties concerned to submit observations with regard to the information received under article 8 of the Optional Protocol. The Committee received an additional submission under article 8 of the Optional Protocol, which was registered as submission No. 2013/2. In relation to inquiry No. 2010/1, the experts designated to conduct the inquiry held a meeting with the ambassador of the State party concerned.

Annex I

Statement of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on the role of women in the process of political transition in Egypt, Libya and Tunisia, adopted on 26 July 2013 at its fifty-fifth session

1. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women has been following with deep interest the process of political transition in three States parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, namely Egypt, Libya and Tunisia, particularly in relation to the situation of women.
2. In this context, the Committee recalls that women's rights are fundamentally linked to peace, security and sustainable development. The Committee further reaffirms that the Convention and the Optional Protocol thereto provide a comprehensive and overarching international legally binding framework for the prevention and elimination of all forms of discrimination against women, including violence against women, as a cross-cutting issue that is also addressed in other international human rights instruments.
3. The Committee is, however, distressed about attempts to discredit the Convention. It recalls that all States parties have the legal obligation to implement all the provisions of the Convention in all political, social or economic contexts and to take all appropriate measures to prohibit and prevent violations of women's rights.
4. The Committee urges all States parties to strongly condemn all forms of violence against women and girls and to ensure that custom, tradition and cultural or religious considerations are not invoked to justify non-compliance with their legal obligations under the Convention.
5. The Committee further expresses concern about the limited political participation of women and their risk of exclusion and marginalization, notwithstanding their active role during the transition processes in their respective countries.
6. The Committee urges concerned Governments, in cooperation with the relevant United Nations bodies and agencies, non-governmental organizations and all other relevant actors, to fully comply with their obligations to implement the Convention in order to enable women to enjoy all their human rights on an equal basis with men and to enhance awareness of the fact that the Convention constitutes a common standard of humanity to which all civilizations and cultures have contributed.
7. The Committee is at the disposal of concerned States parties to assist them in these efforts.

Annex II

Statement of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on strengthened cooperation with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, adopted on 26 July 2013 at its fifty-fifth session

1. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women warmly welcomes the appointment of Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka as Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), considering her eminent position and experience.
2. The Committee recalls that equality between women and men is a fundamental principle of sustainable development, peace and democracy and considers that UN-Women has a key role to play in supporting States parties in the implementation of their legally binding obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and other norms and standards for the protection and advancement of women.
3. The Committee considers that the post-2015 development agenda provides an opportunity to establish new links between human rights treaty bodies and development entities and to guarantee a more efficient use of financial resources. The empowerment of women and the effective realization of women's rights under the Convention should be a primary consideration in any such efforts.
4. The Committee highlights that, within the ongoing process of developing the post-2015 development agenda, the Convention provides, through its holistic approach, a universal basis for the achievement of formal and substantive equality between women and men.
5. The Committee appreciates the existing relations with UN-Women and the Commission on the Status of Women and welcomes the implementation of the United Nations System-Wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. It also looks forward to exploring ways and means to establish stronger cooperation between the Committee and the United Nations system, especially the gender entities, in order to contribute to better synergy in achieving gender equality and maximizing the benefits for women on the ground.
6. The Committee considers that its cooperation with UN-Women needs to be consolidated through a formal and institutional partnership, which includes:
 - (a) The Committee's participation in international, regional and national meetings on the advancement of women;
 - (b) The reinforcement of its cooperation with UN-Women and the entire United Nations system, especially in promoting and implementing the Convention, in line with the Committee's general recommendations and concluding observations;
 - (c) The consolidation of support for building national human and technical capacity on gender issues;
 - (d) The organization of a special event in 2014 in New York on women's rights and development.